

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the Abstract on page 39 line 3 of the specification with the following amended paragraph:

A programmable controller includes at least one user input interface, and an input register, at least one user output interface ~~and an output register~~, programmable logic hardware and program loading means.

The user input interface and input register is for connection to process plant and/or machinery to provide sampled and stored input data in digital form. The user output interface ~~and output register~~ is for connection to process plant and/or machinery and receives ~~and stores~~ output data in digital form. The programmable logic hardware includes a plurality of basic logic elements and electrically configurable interconnections. The interconnections are configurable to interconnect the logic elements as a user control program circuit and to connect the user control program circuit to the input and output interfaces. The program loading means ~~to~~ enables the user to configure the programmable logic hardware as a circuit implementing a user control program prior to initiating control of the associated process plant and/or machinery.